

Message Text

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PAGE 01 TEL AV 03007 01 OF 02 071000Z
ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 NSAE-00
NSCE-00 SSO-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 SSM-03 PM-05 H-01
INR-10 L-03 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 OMB-01 TRSE-00
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O P 070808Z MAR 78
FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1685
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY CAIRO PRIROITY
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY KUWAIT
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM
USMISSION USUN

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE SECTION 1 OF 2 TEL AVIV 3007

T.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PBOR, PDEV, IS
SUBJECT: GUSH EMUNIM ACCUSES WEIZMAN OF FREEZING SETTLEMENT ACTIVITY
IN SAMARIA

REF: TEL AVIV 2862

1. SUMMARY: GUSH EMUNIM ACCUSES MINISTER OF DEFENSE WEIZMAN
OF ATTEMPTING TO BLOCK SETTLEMENT IN SAMARIA BY FREEZING
DEVELOIKENT WORK IN ALREADY APPROVED SETTLEMENT SITES. MOD
SPOKESMAN DENIES GUSH ACCUSATIONS AND STATES CONSTRUCTION
PLANS AT BEIT EL WERE NOT APPROVED BY MILITARY GOVERNOR
AND FURTHERMORE ARE IN IDF FIRING ZONE. AT NABI SALAH,
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PAGE 02 TEL AV 03007 01 OF 02 071000Z

ACCORDING TO SPOKESMAN, SURVEYING AND ROADBUILDING ACTIVITIES
CONTINUE. HOWEVER, SETTLERS AT NABI SALAH TOLD PRESS THAT
MILITARY GOVERNMENT HAS WITHHELD APPROVAL FOR SETTING UP
OF 50 PRE-FAB HOMES AT SITE. JEWISH AGENCY SETTLEMENT
DIRECTOR-GENERAL RAVID TOLD EMBOFF THAT WHILE WEIZMAN
MAY NOT HAVE ISSUED DIRECT ORDER FREEZING SETTLEMENT
ACTIVITY IN SAMARIA, THERE IS NO QUESTION THAT MILITARY

GOVERNOR OF OCCUPIED TERRITORIES IS NOT ACTING ON PROPOSALS FOR NEW SETTLEMENT ACTIVITY. GUSH EMUNIM IS LIKELY TO REACT TO SITUATION BY STEPPING UP ITS OPPOSITION TO GOI'S (PRIMARILY WEIZMAN'S) CURRENT SETTLEMENT POLICY. END SUMMARY.

2. GUSH EMUNIM SPOKESMAN SLONIM ON MARCH 5 ACCUSED DEFENSE MINISTER WEIZMAN OF ACTING TO BLOCK JEWISH SETTLEMENT IN SAMARIA BY FREEZING DEVELOPMENT WORK IN ALREADY APPROVED SETTLEMENT SITES. SLONIM STATED THAT THE WORLD ZIONIST ORGANIZATION SETTLEMENT DIVISION HAD ALREADY PREPARED PLANS FOR BUILDING A SETTLEMENT ON THE BEIT EL MILITARY BASE WHEN THE IDF INFORMED THE SETTLERS THAT THE PROPOSED SITE WAS IN AN IDF FIRING ZONE. HE ALSO STATED THAT WEIZMAN HAD ORDERED A FREEZE OF ALL DEVELOPMENT WORK AT THE NABI SALAH SITE AS WELL. SETTLERS AT NABI SALAH STATED TO PRESS THAT THE MILITARY GOVERNMENT WAS WITHHOLDING PERMISSION TO PUT UP 50 PRE-FAB HOUSES ON ADJACENT GOVERNMENT LAND. THE LATEST DEVELOPMENT IN THIS SITUATION AT BEIT EL IS A REPORT THAT THE DEPUTY MILITARY COMMANDER OF THE BEIT EL BASE INFORMS THE SETTLERS THERE THAT THEY WOULD NO LONGER RECEIVE FOOD OR ASSISTANCE FROM THE IDF AND THAT THEY HAD TWO DAYS TO MAKE OTHER ARRANGEMENT. CHIEF OF STAFF GUR THEN INTERVENED IN THE AFFAIR AND INSTRUCTED THAT THE SETTLERS BE PROVIDED WITH FOOD BY THE BASE PENDING COMPLETION OF A SEPARATE DINING AREA FOR THE SETTLERS.

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PAGE 03 TEL AV 03007 01 OF 02 071000Z

3. IN RESPONSE TO GUSH ACCUSATIONS, THE MOD SPOKESMAN STATED THAT THE BEIT EL SETTLERS HAD PREPARED THEIR CONSTRUCTION PLANS WITHOUT RECEIVING MOD APPROVAL, AND CONFIRMEZ THAT THEIR PROPOSED SITE WAS IN AN AREA USED AS AN IDF FIRING RANGE. HE ADDED THAT THE SETTLERS HAD BEEN CONSULTED AND OFFERED AN ALTERNATIVE SITE. REGARDING NABI SALAH, NO ORDER FREEZING DEVELOPMENT WORK HAS BEEN GIVEN. IN FACT, ACCORDING TO THE SPOKESMAN, SURVEYING AND GCAD BUILDING AT NABI SALAH ARE CONTINUING.

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PAGE 01 TEL AV 03007 02 OF 02 071007Z
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LIMITED OFFICIAL USE SECTION 2 OF 2 TEL AVIV 3007

4. DIRECTOR-GENERAL RAVID OF THE JEWISH AGENCY SETTLEMENT
DEPARTMENT TOLD EMBOFF THAT IT IS DIFFICULT TO SAY IF WEIZMAN
HAS FROZEN SETTLEMENT ACTIVITY IN SAMARIA OR NOT. HE
NOTED THAT THE WZO SETTLEMENT DIVISION
MUST APPLY TO THE MILITARY GOVERNOR FOR PERMISSION TO
UNDERTAKE ANY SETTLEMENT ACTIVITY IN THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES.
SUCH APPROVAL CAN TAKE 3 DAYS, 3 MONTHS OR MAY NEVER
BE GIVEN. IN ANY CASE, RABID STATED THE MILITARY GOVERNOR
HAS DEFINITELY BEEN SITTING ON SEVERAL SETTLEMENT PROPOSALS
FOR THE PAST FEW WEEKS. HE ALSO CONFIRMED THE GUSH STATE-
MENT THAT THE SETTLEMENT DIVISION HAD BEEN WORKING ON A PLAN
FOR BEIT EL. ON THE OTHER HAND, HE ADDED THAT GROUND
PREPARATION HAD NOT STARTED AT EITHER SITE.
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PAGE 02 TEL AV 03007 02 OF 02 071007Z

5. MEANWHILE, AN ELON MORE (GUSH-AFFILIATED) GROUP OF 24
FAMILIES STATED THAT THEY HAVE DECIDED TO ESTABLISH A
SETTLEMENT ON A HILL OVERLOOKING NABLUS. THEIR SPOKESMAN
TOLD THE PRESS THAT THE GROUP WILL SETTLE EVEN WITHOUT
GOI APPROVAL AND DESPITE THE GUSH SECRETARIAT'S NEGATIVE
VIEW OF SUCH AN ACT.

6. COMMENT: AS RAVID POINTED OUT,
THE MILITARY GOVERNOR OF THE TERRITORIES HAS APPARENTLY
BEEN GIVEN INSTRUCTIONS NOT TO ACT ON SETTLEMENT
PROPOSALS. ALTHOUGH WEIZMAN IS IN FAVOR OF SETTLEMENT ON
THE WEST BANK, HE NONETHELESS DOES NOT HAVE MUCH SYMPATHY

WITH THE SETTLEMENTS SET UP BY THE GUSH FOR SHOW PURPOSES. IT APPEARS THAT WEIZMAN FINALLY REALIZED THAT HE DOES NOT HAVE TO WORK THROUGH THE CABINET OR ISSUE DIRECT--AND POLITICALLY CONTROVERSIAL--ORDERS TO DELAY OR TERMINATE SETTLEMENT ACTIVITY HE DOES NOT FAVOR. WEIZMAN PROBABLY TOOK THESE STEPS TO PRECLUDE THE OCCURENCE OF EMBARRASSING SETTLEMENT ACTIVITIES DURING HIS AND THE PRIME MINISTER'S TRIP TO THE US.

7. IT IS LIKELY THAT THE GUSH WILL NOT TAKE LYING DOWN WEIZMAN'S REASSERTION OF GOI AUTHORITY OVER SETTLEMENT ACTIVITY. THE PRESS REPORTS THAT THE GUSH IS PLANNING TO START UP A CAMPAIGN AGAINST THE GOVERNMENT'S POLICY OF FREEZING SETTLEMENT ACTIVITY. THE KICKOFF OF THE CAMPAIGN IS EXPECTED TO BE A MASS RALLY OF GUSH SYMPATHIZERS. CERTIAN TO CONTRIBUTE TO INCREASED GUSH EXTREMISM AND ACTIVISM IS THE RETURN TO GUSH LEADERSHIP OF RABBI MOSHE LEVINGER OF HEBRON/KIRYAT ARBA FAME. LEVINGER WAS RECENTLY ELECTED, ALONG WITH HANAN PORAT, GERSHON SHOFAT, AND BENNY KZUBER, OT HEAD A NEW GUSH SECRETARIAT.
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PAGE 03 TEL AV 03007 02 OF 02 071007Z

8. THE LATEST BREAKING DEVELOPMENT IN THIS AFFAIR ARE REPORTS FROM ISRAELI CORRESPONDENTS IN NEW YORK THAT WEIZMAN HAS THREATENED TO TERMINATE HIS VISIT TO THE US AND RESIGN FROM THE GOVERNMENT IF THE WORK AT BEIT EL AND NABI SALAH IS RESUMED. BEGIN WAS SAID TO HAVE CONTACTED THE DEFENSE MINISTER REGARDING THE SETTLEMENT WORK AT THESE SITES AND IN REACTION WEIZMAN WAS REPORTED TO HAVE STATED THAT IF ONE BULLDOZER GOES TO WORK HE WILL RETURN TO ISRAEL IMMEDIATELY AND SUBMIT HIS RESIGNATION FROM THE GOVERNMENT.
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